Woodbridge Armory

Dedication Program

1st Medium Tank Battalion

53rd Armor NJARNG

NOVEMBER 3, 1961 7:30 p. m.

"They forced the attack . . ."

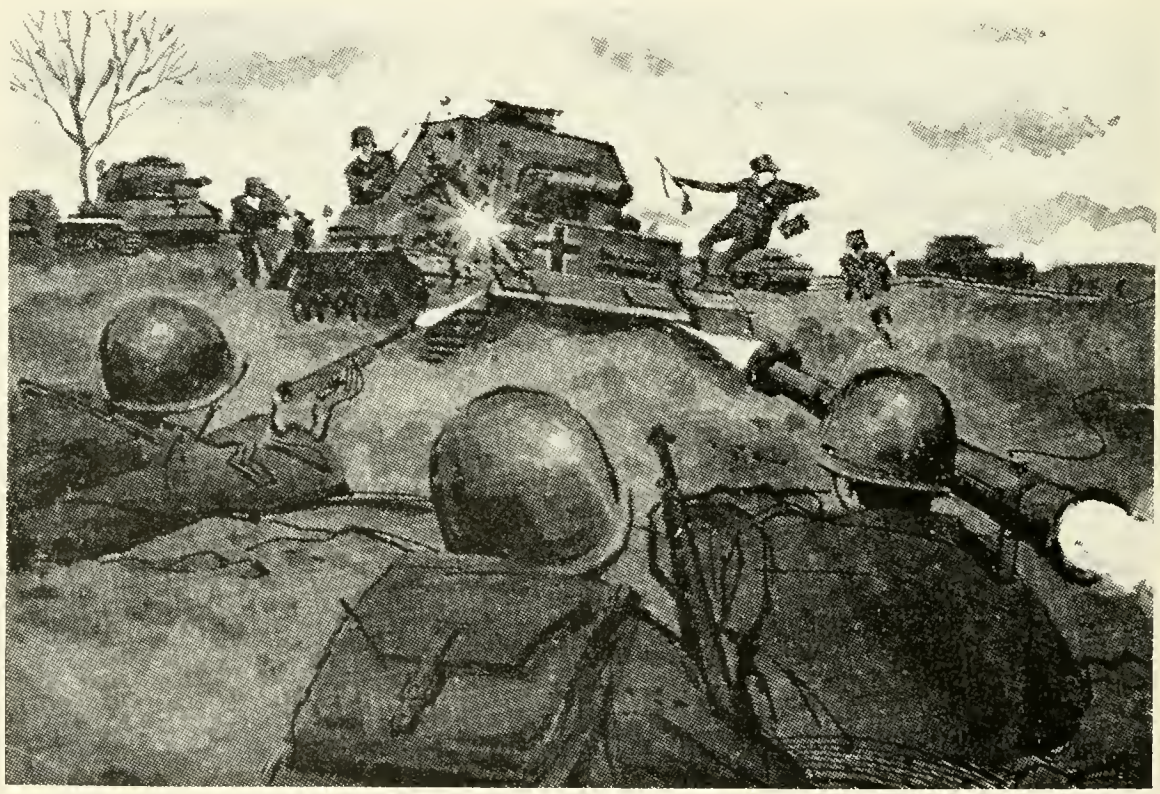
WHEN the Germans launched a fierce tank-infantry counterattack to penetrate the Allied line east of the Vosges Mountains, the 2d Battalion, 114th Infantry, was thrown in to repulse the thrust.

Outgunned and outnumbered, men of the 2d Battalion clung to their soggy, shallow foxholes near Schalback, France—a thin line of Infantrymen with rifles, their machine guns knocked out of action by point-blank German tank fire, their bazooka rounds bouncing off the heavy German armor.

Men of the New Jersey Guard unit knew full well the price of defeat—elimination of the entire 44th Infantry Division and jeopardy for all troops East of the Vosges. They held their ground, rising after enemy tanks had passed over their foxholes to annihilate accompanying Infantry, and forced the Germans to withdraw.

In the dramatic language of the Presidential citation earned by their heroic action on 25 Nov. 1944: "Not only did (they) . . . refuse to give way in the face of this fierce onslaught but they forced the attack at every opportunity."

Thus was another American military legend built—a proud lesson in valor inherited by their successors in New Jersey's 1st Medium Tank Battalion, 53d Armor, at Woodbridge, N. J.



The National Guard Defends America

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Reprinted from the back cover of the October, 1961 issue of National Guardsmen Magazine.

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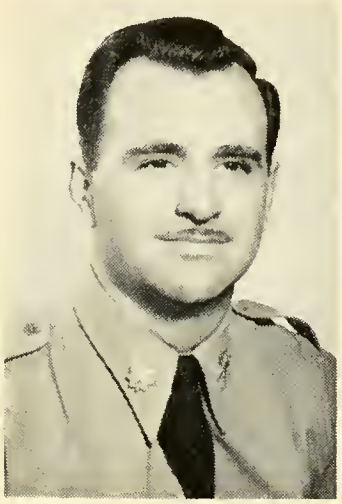
53rd Armor NJARNG
625 Main Street, Woodbridge, New Jersey



On behalf of the officers and men of the 1st Medium Tank Battalion, 53rd Armor New Jersey Army National Guard, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the many contributors who have so generously purchased advertising space in this dedication booklet. Without this cooperation this armory dedication program could not have been presented.

I feel that the cooperation of the many business men, organizations and individuals who have participated in the program is indicative of the spirit of cooperation between civilian industry, individuals and the citizen soldiers of the National Guard that we try at all times to maintain.

Leonard J. Zanetti

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HISTORY

THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD is the oldest military establishment in the United States, older than the nation itself. The first unit, the 182d Infantry of the Massachusetts National Guard, was organized in 1636. Since that time, the Guard has fought in every major conflict in which the United States has been engaged. During our early years as a nation, settlers met in the village square to train for their local protection. It's much the same today. Except 20th Century minutemen meet in modern armories instead of on the village green, and train with modern equipment instead of muskets.

MISSION

THE NATIONAL GUARD of the United States is the only reserve component in the United States with a dual Federal-State mission. As a part of the reserve of the Army, the Army National Guard of the United States is organized, trained and equipped so that it will be available in times of national emergency or war. Units may be ordered into federal service by the President in the event of a national emergency. As National Guard units of the State, they may be called upon for State duty by the governor in the event of civil disturbance or disaster to preserve peace and order and protect life and property.

STRENGTH TODAY

THERE ARE approximately 400,000 officers and men in the Army National Guard in 50 States, District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Of these, approximately 20,000 are full-time technicians who perform vital administrative and maintenance tasks in their units. The rest are citizen-soldiers who go to school or hold positions in their community.

TYPES OF UNITS

THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD is made up of 21 infantry divisions, six armored divisions, and hundreds of other combat and support type units. In addition, there are approximately 113 antiaircraft artillery battalions, 70 field artillery battalions, 11 regimental combat teams, and nine armored cavalry regiments within the Army National Guard. In all, there are over 5,400 company-size units throughout the United States and its Territories.

TRAINING

THE TRAINING of the Army National Guard is carried out under the supervision of the Regular Army. All Army Guard enlistees who have had no prior active military service are required to take six months of active-duty training at an Army Training Center. Thousands of Guard officers and enlisted men are enrolled in Army Service Schools, taking either resident or extension courses. Officer candidate schools for Army National Guardsmen are conducted by the Army and by many States. All this means that units are being relieved of the responsibility of conducting basic individual training. More and more units, for the first time in history, are beginning to train exclusively on the unit level.

MOBILIZATION READINESS

SINCE MOBILIZATION readiness is the shortest distance (in terms of training time) between the armory and the battlefield **after** M-day, the level of training the Army National Guard achieves **before** M-day is of primary importance. The ultimate goal, set by the Continental Army Command, is to have all Guard units so highly trained that it will take a matter of weeks to prepare them for combat in the event of war. With units beginning to train on the unit level, this goal is clearly in sight.

Program

1930 Hours (7:30 P.M.)	Assembly and Seating of Public
1955 Hours (7:55 P.M.)	Escorting of Speakers and guests
2000 Hours (8:00 P.M.)	Invocation by Major (Chaplain) Lawrence B. Robinson—103rd Armor Group, New Jersey Army National Guard
	National Anthem
	Address of Welcome by Lieutenant Colonel Leonard J. Zanetti, Commanding Officer 1st Medium Tank Battalion (Patton) 53rd Armor New Jersey Army National Guard
	Introduction of Guests
	Remarks by: Honorable Frederick M. Adams Mayor of Woodbridge
	Major General Edward O. Wolf Commanding General 50th Armored Division New Jersey Army National Guard
	Honorable James J. Flynn Mayor of Perth Amboy
	Major General James F. Cantwell Chief of Staff Department of Defense State of New Jersey
	Dedication Address Major General Donald W. McGowan Chief, National Guard Bureau Washington, D. C.
	Presentation of "I am the Guard"
	Benediction
2100 Hours (9:00 P.M.)	Refreshments and Inspection of Armory Facilities and Military Equipment.
2230 Hours (10:30 P.M.)	Dancing

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THE EDISON TOWNSHIP - FORDS BEACON

The music for this occasion is provided by a grant from trust funds of the Recording Industries obtained by the cooperation of Local 313, American Federation of Musicians.

Walter Kross and his Orchestra — Rental of piano donated by Jardot Piano Company, Rahway Avenue, Woodbridge — Moving of piano by Fred Strahl Trucking Company.

I AM THE GUARD

Civilian in Peace, Soldier in War . . . of security and honor, for three centuries I have been the custodian, I am the Guard.

I was with Washington in the dim forests, fought the wily warrior, and watched the dark night bow to morning . . . At Concord's bridge, I fired the fateful shot heard around the world. I bled on Bunker Hill . . . My footprints marked the snows at Valley Forge . . . I pulled a muffled oar on the barge that bridged the icy Delaware . . . I stood with Washington on the sun-drenched heights of Yorktown . . . I saw the sword surrendered . . . I am the Guard . . . I pulled the trigger that loosed the long rifle's havoc at New Orleans . . . These things I knew — I was there! . . . I saw both sides of the War between the States—I was there! The hill at San Juan felt the fury of my charge . . . The far plains of the Philippines echoed to my shout . . . On the Mexican border I stood . . . I am the Guard . . . The dark forests of the Argonne blazed with my barrage . . . Chateau Thierry crumbled to my cannonade . . . Under the arches of victory I marched in legion — I was there! . . .I am the Guard . . . I bowed briefly on the grim Corregidor, then saw the light of liberation shine on the faces of my comrades . . . Through the jungles and on the beaches, I fought the enemy, beat, battered and broke him . . . I raised our banner to the serene air on Okinawa—I scrambled over Normandy's beaches — I was there . . . I am the Guard. Across the 38th Parallel I made my stand . . . I flew MIG Alley — I was there! . . . I was there — I am the Guard.

Soldier in War, civilian in peace . . . I am the Guard.

I was at Johnstown, where the raging waters boomed down the valley . . . I cradled the crying child in my arms and saw terror leave her eyes . . . I moved through smoke and flame at Texas City . . . The stricken knew the comfort of my skill . . . I dropped the food that fed the starving beasts on the frozen fields of the west and through towering drifts I ploughed to rescue the marooned. I have faced forward to the tornado, the typhoon, the horror of the hurricane and flood—these things I know — I was there! . . . I am the Guard. I have brought a more abundant, a fuller, a finer life to our youth. Wherever a strong arm and valiant spirit must defend the Nation, in peace or war, wherever a child cries, or a woman weeps in time of disaster, there I stand . . . I am the Guard. For three centuries a soldier in war, a civilian in peace — of security and honor, I am the custodian, now and forever . . . I am the Guard.

HISTORY OF THE ARMY NATIONAL GUARD

IN WOODBRIDGE, NEW JERSEY

The National Guard officially came to Woodbridge, New Jersey on 7 December 1948 as Company G 114th Infantry Regiment. Its designation was designated by Major General Donald W. McGowan and sponsored by the Veterans alliance of Woodbridge Township. The first drills were conducted at the Elizabeth Armory until a converted Army barracks from Fort Monmouth, New Jersey was set up on Route 9, Woodbridge, New Jersey.

The original unit was commanded by Major (then Captain) Andrew J. Gadek, of Woodbridge, New Jersey. Major Gadek is now the Executive Officer of the 1st Medium Tank Battalion 53rd Armor, with units in Woodbridge and Bound Brook, New Jersey. Company C was activated on 1 March 1950 and Company D was redesignated from the 207th Engineer Company on 1 March 1956. On 8 May 1954 all units were redesignated as part of the 252nd Tank Battalion, 103rd Armor Group, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William L. O'Dea.

At the present time the Woodbridge Companies are part of the First Medium Tank Battalion, 53rd Armor which is part of the 103rd Armor Group. The First Medium Tank Battalion, 53rd Armor is commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Leonard J. Zanetti, of Morristown, New Jersey.

The new Armory now contains, Hq and Hq Company, Companies A, C and D with the remaining Company B being situated in Bound Brook, New Jersey. Since its inception, the local units, now a Battalion have progressed to a point where it is well established, equipped and highly trained National Guard Battalion. These units proudly took their place in our highly regarded New Jersey National Guard. It has received many commendations and is well known for its exceptional "Esprit de Corps".

The Battalion has achieved not only military acclaim, but has proved its service to the community during the South Amboy explosion in May 1950, when it arrived on the scene within one hour and remained for a period of four days completely taking charge of rescue work and protecting the property of the local residents. At the time of the disastrous Woodbridge railroad accident, elements of the Battalion covered the operation for a period of two days with its entire resources.

The National Guard of Woodbridge is proud of its membership in the community of Woodbridge and will continue to be ready to serve our county and our community at all times.

Our Guard is your Guard, and we are you.